

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: All Design Review Board Members

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**SUBJECT: Brooklyn Basin, Shoreline Park, City of Oakland, Alameda County
(BCDC Permit No. 2006.007.01)**

(For Board consideration on May 9, 2016, Second Review of Shoreline Park Design)

Project Summary

Project Sponsors. Zarsion-Oakland Harbor Partners (formerly Oakland Harbor Partners, LLC), City of Oakland, and Port of Oakland

Project Representatives. Patrick Van Ness and Deborah Tu, Signature Development Group; Sarah Kuehl, Einwiller Kuehl, Inc.

Project Site and BCDC Permit. The Brooklyn Basin development project covers 64 acres at the Oakland waterfront, and is located between the Oakland Estuary and Embarcadero, southeast of Jack London Square, in the City of Oakland, Alameda County. Approximately 17.5 acres of the site are located within BCDC's 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction; the remaining 46.5 acres of the project site are located outside of BCDC's jurisdiction. (Exhibit pgs. 2 and 3).

On February 4, 2011, the Commission issued BCDC Permit No. 2006.007.01 to redevelop the project site, a former maritime/industrial district, into a mixed-use waterfront neighborhood. Prior to permit issuance, the proposed project underwent four reviews by the Commission's Design Review Board (Board). The project will essentially create a new neighborhood with strong connections to nearby downtown Oakland, Jack London Square, and adjacent neighborhoods. The primary land use will be residential, however, the development includes visitor and neighborhood-serving retail and approximately 30 acres of public open space.

Although the Commission authorized the project in its entirety, BCDC Permit No. 2006.007.01 requires further Board consideration of preliminary and detailed design plans for the site's public access areas and select contiguous developed project features. The Board's May 9, 2016 review is the second review regarding Shoreline Park.

The subject Board review is limited to the Shoreline Park (Exhibit p.4) As the first park proposed for implementation within the permitted Brooklyn Basin development, and the park area most closely tied to the site's industrial heritage, it will establish the setting and stage for other park improvements and associated development to follow. In the future, the Board will also review other park areas within the development including Estuary Park, Channel Park, South Park, and Gateway Park, as detailed plans for these areas are developed.

Project Description. Shoreline Park occupies an approximately 10-acre site, and will constitute the largest park within the assembly of waterfront open spaces along the Brooklyn Basin waterfront. Shoreline Park extends from the Embarcadero to Clinton Basin and comprises approximately a third of the open space planned for the emerging Brooklyn Basin mixed-use community. The shoreline at the park is approximately a half-mile long and generally ranges about 150 to 200 feet in width (Exhibit p.4).

As originally authorized and required in BCDC Permit No. 2006.007.01, Shoreline Park included approximately 7.9 acres of public access, including a fountain, approximately 40 benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, wharf railings, a Bay Trail directional map, four interpretive/historic markers, a vertical trail marker, an approximately 24,600-square-foot rain garden/stormwater detention basin, and modest improvements of the train trestle located east of the Ninth Avenue terminal building.

Approximately half of Shoreline Park is located on a wharf, including the Ninth Avenue terminal building, built on concrete and wood pilings, located partially over the Bay, which historically handled break bulk cargo. At the wharf, a flexible open lawn area was originally envisioned, but additional geotechnical investigation revealed that the structure's condition would limit the extent and depth of the planted soil and, thus, this concept is no longer considered feasible. A 20,000-square-foot portion of the Ninth Avenue terminal building will be retained, rehabilitated, and used for bay-oriented commercial recreation and public assembly with associated proposed uses including a maritime museum, café, and community center.

First DRB Review of Shoreline Park. In its first review of the park on February 9, 2015, the Board advised that each shoreline park for the permitted Brooklyn Basin project be designed to have a unique identity. The Board also advised on the widths of the San Francisco Bay Trail and other shoreline paths, and encouraged pathways to be constructed of smooth and durable paving, rather than wood decking. The Board encouraged the use of vertical elements in the vicinity of the removed portion of the Ninth Avenue terminal building to recall the building's historic presence and to support its use for special events, and programming large open spaces in the park to activate the waterfront. Finally, the Board recommended a more curvilinear design for the park's landscaped areas and agreed with proposed geometric forms used in the site's hardscape.

City of Oakland Planning Commission and Local Community Revised Design. Subsequent to the Board's initial review of the Shoreline Park, the local community expressed concerns about the park design to the City of Oakland (City), including that the section of the Ninth Avenue Terminal building proposed for demolition be incorporated into the park in a way that was more meaningful to the community. The community believed the design was "banal" and did not reflect the City of Oakland's character, and requested changes, including the incorporation of wind and shade protection in the open deck area of the park. Consequently, the City requested further design refinements of the project sponsors reflecting community input.

The resulting redesigned Shoreline Park retains its essential elements, including the large flexible deck area, and the location of the Bay Trail and landscaped areas. However, as described below, the overall park design has substantially changed from the project reviewed by the Board on February 9, 2015. In light of these design modifications, the Commission staff determined that further Board review was warranted.

Design Review Issues. The Board’s comments and advice are sought on five general issues regarding the proposed redesign of the public access improvements at Shoreline Park, while considering applicable BCDC policies and guidelines as noted below:

1. **Does the redesigned Shoreline Park provide adequate pedestrian and bicycle connections to and along the shoreline?**

The San Francisco Bay Plan (Bay Plan) policies on *Public Access* include, in part:

“Access to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare where convenient parking or public transportation may be available.”

BCDC’s Public Access Design Guidelines include, in part:

“[Shoreline development should] provide a clear and continuous transition to adjacent developments,...use local public street networks to inform shoreline site design and to extend the public realm to the Bay,... [and] provide connections perpendicular to the shoreline.”

As redesigned, the park includes a 30-foot-wide bridge at the east end of the Ninth Avenue Terminal building, which would serve as an entry point toward the terminal building and to the park. The existing 20-foot-wide former train trestle would be retained and used as a trail segment. At the western end of the park, the primary shoreline trail has been relocated inland. (Exhibit p. 7).

2. **Does the modified project design provide adequate, usable, and attractive public access space appropriate to the scale of adjacent authorized development and the site in its entirety?**

The Bay Plan policies on Public Access include, in part:

“Public access provided as a condition of any approval should be consistent with the project and the physical environment...[t]he improvements should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline...”

The Public Access Design Guidelines include, in part:

“Shoreline access [should be] designed and built to encourage diverse, Bay-related activities along the shoreline...to create a “sense of place,” and be “designed for a wide range of users...”

The redesigned park includes terraces and ramps to the water at the western edge of the project site. The design incorporates exposed existing riprap and pilings as remnant features of the original wharf. The spaces in the park are designed to encourage a variety of uses and include benches and other seating elements. The large deck adjacent to the Ninth Avenue Terminal building is redesigned and includes “repurposed” vertical remnants from the demolished portion of the building to be used for various purposes (e.g., lighting, plants, art, and shade). (Exhibit p. 18).

3. **Does the redesigned park protect public views of the Bay through view corridors required in the original BCDC permit?**

The Bay Plan policies on Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views include, in part:

“All bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay. Maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas, [and] from the Bay itself....”

BCDC’s Public Access Design Guidelines include, in part:

“View opportunities, shoreline configuration and access points are factors that determine a site’s inherent public access opportunities.”

The modified design features a large sloped lawn area at the western end of the park, which is designed to protect the view corridor along Eighth Avenue required in the subject BCDC Permit. The redesigned large deck portion of the park located along the southern wharf includes repurposed vertical trestles of the original terminal building, which could affect public views in the park and from the street. (Exhibit pgs. 18-20).

4. **Are the proposed connections to the water well designed and appropriately placed, and does their design ensure resiliency and future adaptation to sea level rise and flooding?**

The Bay Plan policies on Recreation include, in part:

“Public launching facilities for a variety of boats and other water-oriented recreational craft, such as kayaks, canoes and sailboards, should be provided in waterfront parks where feasible.”

The Bay Plan policies on Public Access include, in part:

“Any public access provided as a condition of development should... be required to remain viable in the event of future sea level rise or flooding....”

The redesigned park includes a dock at the western edge of the park, not included in the original design, which would provide a near-water experience and serve as a landing destination for kayaks and other non-motorized boats. (Exhibit p. 10). The majority of the park is located above a sea level rise projection of 36-inches including a 100-year storm event. However, the ramps that provide an experience close to the water are at a lower elevation and could be susceptible to flooding (Exhibit p. 6).

5. **Do the proposed special event areas and associated events pose a potential impact on authorized and required public access areas?**

The Bay Plan policies on Public Access include, in part:

“Public access provided as a condition of any approval should be consistent with the project and the physical environment...[t]he improvements should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline...”

The plaza and Terminal Building at the deck and western edge of the park are proposed for occasional major and smaller scale special events. (Exhibit p. 8.)